

Ms. Washington has devoted her life to caring for her community, especially the elderly. She began her tenure at Senior Citizens Services in 1973, and shortly thereafter became the director of Fellowship Corner Senior Center on the south side of Fort Worth on New York Avenue. Here, she has provided care for families through multiple generations, ensuring that they are able to age in place with health and dignity through the activities and friendships offered at Fellowship Corner Senior Center. Here, she empowers older adults to find new friends, improve their health with nutrition and exercise, and contribute back through volunteer service.

Most notably, Ms. Washington founded a dance group known as the Steppin' Grannies, which performs around the DFW Metroplex, giving seniors the opportunity to have fun while staying active.

For over 40 years, Ms. Washington has encouraged older adults throughout Tarrant County to live with purpose and independence. Next week, she will be given the award at the Annual Senior Spirits Awards, given by Senior Citizen Services of Tarrant County.

Madam Speaker, again, I would like to congratulate Ms. Alene Washington and commend her for her dedication to Tarrant County seniors.

NO SUBSIDIES WITHOUT VERIFICATION ACT

(Mr. COFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN. Madam Speaker, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, without the legislation just passed by this Chamber, fraudulent subsidy payments under the Affordable Care Act could account for \$250 billion over the next decade. For this reason, I'm proud to have voted in support of H.R. 2775, the No Subsidies Without Verification Act.

The White House has come out in strong opposition to this proposal, citing the fact that a program to verify eligibility already exists. I wonder, though, if a plan already exists, why the strong opposition to this proposal? And in the broader context, why the strong opposition to any proposal that seeks to create accountability with respect to Federal spending?

Across the Nation, millions of families sit at their kitchen tables in order to figure out their limited finances and to make difficult decisions, ensuring that their hard-earned dollars are being stretched to maximum effect. The Federal Government, however, shies away from any opportunity to ensure the same accountability.

Madam Speaker, Americans are tired of seeing their hard-earned tax dollars wasted through fraud. I hope to see this commonsense legislation signed into law.

IN PRAISE OF DR. THOMAS F. FREEMAN: EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR, AND LEGENDARY COACH AND TEACHER OF THE ART OF DEBATE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, this is a great opportunity to rise today to salute and praise Dr. Thomas F. Freeman: educator, scholar, and legendary coach and teacher of the art of debate at the historic Texas Southern University, supporting the historic Texas Southern University debate team.

For those of you who have not heard of that team, I ask you to look closely at the number of awards it has received because of this great educator. He comes from a great family with a great wife, who is also an educator.

Today I rise to salute him as a first-rank scholar, but also as a person of great eloquence, talent, and oration, someone who was inspirational to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the honorable late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, my predecessor.

A prodigy himself, Dr. Freeman graduated from Virginia Union University at 18 and went on to become a professor at Virginia Union before his 30th birthday. He would later receive degrees from Andover Newton Theological School, Harvard University, Chicago Divinity School, the University of Vienna in Austria, and the University of Liberia in Africa. Dr. Freeman was among a group of accomplished academics of color hired by Texas Southern University.

What I want to say most about Dr. Freeman is that he is a renaissance man. He's a man of courage. He's a man who broke color lines, teaching at Rice University for 23 years. He is a man that has a number of sayings that are so vital. One is:

There is an ethical dimension to leadership. If you do not consider ethics, then your leadership is hollow.

I thank Dr. Freeman for being the kind of icon that America can honor. His leadership will be rewarded by the many students who have gone on to greatness because of his tutoring. In fact, even Denzel Washington was tutored by Dr. Thomas Freeman.

He is 95 years old and will be honored in his retirement at Texas Southern University tomorrow, Friday, September 13, 2013. However, his light will continue to shine, for he will continue to work with students and to provide light to those who are willing to learn.

Thank you, Dr. Freeman, for being a great American and a great leader and a man of ethics, passion, Christianity, and courage.

□ 1145

INVESTIGATING BENGHAZI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2013, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, and to do so the day after the anniversary of the tragic attack on America that took place September 11, 2001, and the tragic attack that took place against Americans in Benghazi September 11, 2012.

Who would have believed, Madam Speaker, that a full year would go by and we would still not have the truth, we would still not be to the bottom of the Benghazi events. We still wouldn't have a timeline, we wouldn't have a chronology, we wouldn't have an autopsy report from Ambassador Stevens and others, we wouldn't have the testimony of those who were wounded and those who survived, and we wouldn't have the full story from the administration. And we wouldn't have yet the confession from the administration that they willfully, I believe, misinformed the American people and the United States Congress.

And so the individual who has taken the lead on this Benghazi series of events and called for a special select committee to investigate is the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), and I am very pleased to yield to the leader on the Benghazi incident here in the United States Congress, Mr. WOLF of Virginia.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. KING for the time. I am very grateful.

Madam Speaker, yesterday marked the one-year anniversary of the deadly attacks on the U.S. consulate and CIA annex in Benghazi, Libya, which took the lives of four Americans, and seriously wounded several others. One is still out at Walter Reed Hospital after one year.

Despite a year of investigations in five different House committees, most of the key questions about what happened in Benghazi and why no response was authorized by Washington remain unanswered. So far the Congress has failed.

That is why since last November I have been pushing for a House select committee to focus on this investigation, hold public hearings, issue subpoenas to key witnesses and survivors, and produce a final report that answers these important questions. One hundred seventy-four Republicans in the House have now cosponsored H. Res. 36 to establish a select committee—three-quarters of the majority—and six new cosponsors joined this week alone.

The select committee approach has been endorsed by family members of the Benghazi victims, the special operations community, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*, among many other prominent individuals and organizations.

I was pleased to receive a copy of a letter sent to the Speaker earlier this

week calling for the creation of a select committee and signed by some of the most respected and distinguished national security and military leaders that have served our country.

These leaders include:

Former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, who also served as judge in the trial of the Blind Sheikh, the first trial dealing with an attack against the World Trade Center;

Admiral James "Ace" Lyons, U.S. Navy, Retired, former commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific fleet;

General Frederick J. Kroesen, U.S. Army, Retired, former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army;

Lieutenant General William "Jerry" Boykin, U.S. Army, Retired, former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and commander in Mogadishu during the "Black Hawk down" incident;

Lieutenant General Harry Edward Soyster, U.S. Army, Retired, former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency;

Ambassador Henry Cooper, former chief negotiator of the defense and space talks and the former Director, Strategic Defense Initiative;

Major General Paul E. Vallely, U.S. Army, Retired, former deputy commander of the U.S. Army Forces, Pacific;

Honorable Tidal McCoy, former Secretary of the Air Force;

Lieutenant Colonel Allen West, U.S. Army, Retired, and former Member of Congress;

Honorable Joseph E. Schmitz, former inspector general of the Department of Defense;

Honorable Michelle Van Cleave, former National Counterintelligence Executive;

Vice Admiral Robert Monroe, U.S. Navy, Retired, former Director of the Defense Nuclear Agency; and

Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy.

It is good to have their support for this important effort, and I would like now to read the text of their letter.

They said:

Dear Mr. Speaker:

As former military, intelligence and national security officials with extensive experience in security policy and practice, we are concerned about the American people's apparently serious loss of confidence in the institutions of their government. One factor contributing to this alienation has been the failure of those institutions to respond appropriately to the murderous jihadist attacks in Benghazi on September 11, 2012. They rightly expect, at an absolute minimum, that Congress will ensure accountability of those responsible.

As you are well aware, our country is nearing the first anniversary of the assaults on the Special Mission Compound and CIA Annex in Benghazi. To date, however, the five House committees that share jurisdiction have held only a small number of mostly less-than-illuminating hearings into the policies that led to, and the events that occurred during and after, the murder of four of our countrymen and the wounding of many more.

We appreciate that the chairmen of these committees produced four months ago a joint "interim report." Yet, its authors acknowledged that they did not have answers to many crucial national security questions. In addition, no timeframe has been publicly announced for going beyond the interim report or holding additional hearings toward that end. This is particularly troubling in light of press accounts that the survivors of the Benghazi attack are being intimidated and risk job action should they come forward with their eyewitness account.

If Congress does not afford them an opportunity to do so without fear of retaliation by issuing subpoenas for their testimony, it will be complicit in precluding their help in seeing justice served—and in denying the American people the full accounting to which they are entitled.

They go on to say:

We believe an ample chance has been afforded for the regular order to operate in investigating Benghazi-gate. It has failed to do so. Now is the time for a select committee to be established with a mandate to draw upon the five committees' existing investigative resources and results to date and to complete—if possible by year's end—the necessary, thorough and comprehensive inquiry. This approach can alleviate concern about undue costs and further delay in convening a select committee.

Mr. Speaker, they go on to say:

The survivors want to tell their stories and correct the record. Two different books based on their stories are reportedly in the works. If the American people learn what happened from a published account rather than from those charged with congressional oversight, the perception of a coverup—or at least a serious dereliction of duty—is inevitable.

Our Republic is predicated on the trust of the governed in those they choose to represent them. We must not allow the jihadists who have thus far paid no price for murdering Ambassador Stevens, murdering three of his comrades and afflicting the lives of so many others, to do violence as well to our people's confidence in their constitutional form of government.

For all these reasons, we call upon you to establish without further delay a select committee to investigate the Benghazi attacks.

I think they make a very, very powerful case. For the Congress to fail to do this, as they said, the Congress will be complicit in this. So I call on the Speaker of the House to do what these gentlemen, who have as much experience as any Member who serves in this Congress on either side, have asked us to do, and establish a select committee.

With that, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Virginia and ask if the gentleman could stick around for a moment. I have a couple of questions that occurred to me as I was listening to his presentation. I would like to ask for the record, and your knowledge of the Benghazi incident goes more deep than mine does, and I think probably as deep as anyone in the Congress does, Mr. WOLF, and so I wanted to ask: Do we know how many survivors there were from the Benghazi incident?

Mr. WOLF. There were roughly 30 or 31 or so that waited on the tarmac after the fighting had ended to be

picked up, and they were not picked up in an American plane; they were picked up in a Libyan plane. There were a number of wounded. One, Mr. David Ubben, who is currently out at Walter Reed, and another gentleman who was severely wounded, they were flown out separate from that other group, and they were flown out not in an American plane but in a Libyan plane, maybe even commandeered by those that rescued.

We also know that we lost four. Several were Navy SEALs. And we were also told by those who have been in touch with those on the ground that there was a call from the consulate to the annex saying, help us. They were told to stand down by the CIA station chief, not knowing if that came out of Washington or not. They did stand down. They got another call, and they were told to stand again, and they did stand down. They had another call and they finally said we're not standing down, and they went. Some believe that had they gone at the initial time, they could have saved the life of Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith.

Mr. KING of Iowa. The information you provided here, especially information as to the numbers of survivors and the numbers of wounded, where they were picked up, and by a Libyan plane, not a U.S. plane, was that information that was forthcoming delivered to you or the American people by our administration, or how did you learn those facts?

Mr. WOLF. No, it was not delivered by the administration, nor was it delivered by any committee up here. It was delivered by people who are connected to, related to people who were on the ground.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do we know, has any of that information been entered into the record under oath, so far as witnesses are concerned, before the five committees that have jurisdiction?

Mr. WOLF. I think not, but I have not been in some of the closed doors. As you know, that is one of the problems. The Intelligence Committee has everything in closed doors. Quite frankly, if you're a Member of the House, you have very little opportunity to find out sometimes what even goes on in the Intelligence Committee. So they could have been sworn in. The people I have spoken to have not even been called. And I spoke last week, last Tuesday to a person who was on the scene at the time of the attack, and he has not been called.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And so, Mr. WOLF, is it possible that the Select Committee on Intelligence could have had testimony before the committee, and because they are bound by the confidentiality of classified information, that even if they learned something from an open source that also confirms something that they learned in a classified setting, they now are prohibited from speaking about that outside of that room?

Mr. WOLF. I do not know. I do not serve on the Intelligence Committee.

There are all good people on it, and Mr. ROGERS does a good job. I can't answer. They can better answer that. I don't know what the rules are with regard to that.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Let me pick up on that. I have a measure of classified rating as a member of the Judiciary Committee. Those are the rules that we are bound by when we go into a classified setting. What we speak about there, what we learn there, even if we know it from an open source before we go in, or even if we learn about it from an open source after we go out, we cannot speak to that topic outside of the room.

That's one of the reasons why we need the select committee. Even if all of the information we need to know happens to be gathered by the special Select Committee on Intelligence, that doesn't get that information that can be declassified declassified, that doesn't get it correlated with the balance of the information that is public knowledge, or the information that has come before the other committees.

Another question: Do we have any autopsy reports from Ambassador Stevens or any of the other three fatalities that were killed in that action a year and a day ago?

Mr. WOLF. My committee that I chair, the House Appropriations subcommittee that funds the Justice Department and the FBI, we have never received an autopsy report. We have been told how the death of the Ambassador took place verbally, but we have never seen the autopsy report.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do we have a timeline that sets down events that took place from its inception to its relative conclusion in the operations and the cleanup that also correlates with a timeline of the situation room in the White House, and who was in the White House and what they knew and when they knew it? Are you aware of any timeline that correlates that?

□ 1200

Mr. WOLF. There may be. Perhaps the Intel Committee has it. I understand there are some timelines out there that do not quite, quite match; but I do not know the answer to that. That's why we need public hearings.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Virginia. That's my understanding as well. And this colloquy that we've had here, I think, illuminates the questions, some of the questions that can be answered with a special select committee that would be addressing the Benghazi incident.

And a full year and a day has gone by. The trail gets more cold every day. And just yesterday, I saw the announcement that the administration is going to make some of the survivors available to Congress, finally, after a full year, so that we can have some dialogue with them.

I just envision the 9/11 Commission that sat around the table. They swore in witnesses. They built a public

record. The American people watched in on all of those deliberations so they could draw their judgment on whose version was the most accurate and the closest to the truth.

When the 9/11 Commission report came out, it was a bound book about that thick. I read it. A lot of us read it. But that was the definitive response to the United States Congress that said these are the facts as we can determine them, the reasoned judgment of the United States Congress.

That also happened on the Warren Commission report on the assassination of President Kennedy. I think that the Benghazi incident deserves a full investigation in that fashion.

I applaud the gentleman from Virginia for taking the lead on this, and I'll certainly support it all the way to its conclusion.

Mr. WOLF. I thank the gentleman. Thank you for the time.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Virginia. And reclaiming my time, I appreciate having the dialog to this extent.

And I know that the gentleman from Pennsylvania has a real focus on Benghazi. We've had some of this dialogue before, and so I would be very pleased to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Thank you for yielding, and I want to begin by thanking our colleague from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for his leadership with House Resolution 36.

It should not have to come to a select and special committee to investigate this, but it's very apparent that the administration operating on point on this is doing everything they can and expending all resources to obfuscate, stonewall, and keep the truth and the facts from the American people.

And so, while we appreciate the fact that there are numerous committees in the House investigating this simultaneously, but individually, one concerted effort is probably what it's going to take, at the end of the day, to answer the call of this administration who would rather this information not be let out to the American people.

I just want to start out by saying that, you know, a year ago, a year ago on this day, Americans were waking up to or hearing about on their lunch hour that the first Ambassador in over 30 years, a United States Ambassador, had been killed on foreign shores.

And as a person who's operated in the military and as just a citizen who thinks that, look, some of this would make common sense, on the anniversary date of such a historic event and shameful event in America, that we would increase our security posture, especially overseas.

And as a person who has served overseas during 9/11, the anniversary of 9/11, I know very well that we did increase our security posture. So the fact that this happened really leads to questions as to what the heck was going on at the State Department regarding the se-

curity in Benghazi and who was making decisions.

It's disgraceful that an entire year later, despite the fact that a number of terrorists have been identified who have participated in this attack, not one of them has been brought to justice, not one.

And it's also interesting that this administration has the information, the intelligence information that it has regarding Syria. Yet while we were in Benghazi, while we had boots on the ground in Libya, a year later we don't seem to have the facts about the intelligence that occurred there.

Some questions that I have—it's my understanding that Under Secretary Kennedy will be testifying in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee on which I serve next week, and we have some questions for him.

I think the American people want to know why this administration politicized national security during an election cycle regarding the talking points, and who made that order. Who decided that? Who was at the top of that?

The reduction in security forces, again, on 9/11, it's my understanding, with an outpost like Benghazi, that it could only have come from one person. There's only one person in the State Department that is authorized to issue that reduction in security posture, and that is the Secretary.

We want to know whose signature is on the authorization. We want to know who authorized not sending help.

In the military, we don't have a stand down order. But somebody said, no, and somebody didn't contingency plan. Somebody wasn't prepared.

Now, the boots on the ground, the fine soldiers, the airmen, the men and women who would have gone into help, they were ready to go. The United States military was ready to respond. It's the chain of command that wasn't, somewhere along the line. And we want to know who made that decision.

We don't know yet what the Ambassador was doing there. Do we really know?

We've asked the question, but we don't know what his purpose was. Sure, we hear that he was there to solidify that location as an operations point for diplomatic actions and show that everything was normal in Libya again. But on 9/11 you're really going to send him there with a reduced security posture?

Folks, ladies and gentlemen, these Ambassadors don't roll in a car by themselves out to these outposts. They don't even go to their consulates by themselves. They have a security detachment of highly trained people. The vehicles they ride in are not something that you buy on the lot. These guys are loaded up, and they're ready to handle contingencies.

This is abnormal. What was he doing there?

Why does this administration continue to stonewall?

You're hearing that they're giving us everything that we ask for, the emails and so on and so forth.

Why is it that the emails come in a box, to a SCIF, a secure location, our people in the Congress, we're allowed to look at them, our investigators are allowed to look at them, transcribe information, and then the emails go back into the box under armed guard and they're taken away.

We're not allowed to copy them. We're not allowed to get them all at one time. They're meted out to us. Why is that?

If there's nothing to hide, why not have the information so we can all know what it is within the confines of security postures and operational security and security clearances?

Finally, or maybe not finally, who's accountable?

Has anybody been held accountable?

Sure, there were some four employees at the State Department that were excused from their duty for a year, or nearly a year, with pay, and then brought back in. And this is not to disparage those employees.

It's my understanding, since we haven't talked to any of them yet because we've been disallowed to talk to them, that they didn't even know they were held responsible until the day it happened, and they still haven't seen the report that says they were responsible for the reduced security posture. Nobody's been held accountable.

Why wasn't the Secretary involved in the questioning of the ARB, the Accountability Review Board?

The person at the top, not even questioned. That's like having a murder investigation in a family where the husband was having an affair and having strained relations with his wife, the wife was murdered, and he was the only one in town at the time, and not questioning that. That's what that's like.

Nobody questioned the Secretary. Really?

Was there real-time video information via drone, unarmed aerial vehicle?

We heard originally—I was in the questioning, in the hearing with the Secretary, Secretary Clinton, when she originally came earlier this spring, and she said that there was no real-time information.

Yet, on national radio, I heard a guy call into national radio who was the payload operator. And to be clear, the payload operator is not the individual flying the unarmed aerial vehicle. The payload operator is the individual that handles the camera or the weapons system.

So the individual handling the camera called into a national talk show and described what he was seeing as it was occurring. So if we had the real-time information, why weren't we acting on it?

Where is that real-time information?

Why haven't we seen it?

Finally, where was the President during this?

I mean, this is a crisis of national proportion and national security. And I know the President hasn't come before Congress to ask a question, and every

time we ask anybody else the question, the answer's going to be, well, I don't know. I don't keep the President's schedule.

Why can't the American people know the facts?

We just want the truth. We just want the facts. The facts will lead us to the truth. We're not on a witch hunt. The American people deserve to know. The families of the fallen, they deserve to know what happened here.

And I know the administration is hoping that time will go by, debt ceiling, continuing resolution, ObamaCare, Syria, anything will get in the way of finding out what happened here. But we are duty-bound, ladies and gentlemen, Madam Speaker, we are duty-bound to find out this information on behalf of the American people.

I applaud you, Mr. KING. Thank you for yielding the time.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania and appreciate his presentation here on the floor. I'd ask if he could stick around for a moment because I'm trying to do a little research of my own here, and that is that there's a patchwork of information that's been gathered together.

Among the American people, they'd have collectively, within their memory and their records, all that's publicly available. If we could go out and pull it together and consolidate it, then we could organize it.

This Congress is similar to that. We're representatives of the American people. And from each of our districts, each of our sets of responsibilities and access to information, we can put together some of the puzzle here.

But it's hard to put together a puzzle if you don't have the picture that's on the box. This administration has the box, with the pieces, and the picture on the box of the puzzle of what actually happened in Benghazi, and they knew it almost in real-time. And they have been meting out the information, accepting or admitting to information as it was forced upon them thanks to the media, thanks to people that have done real research.

I recall a statement made to our gathering in our meeting that there weren't any wounded from the Benghazi incident out at Walter Reed Army Hospital. One of our Members went out there and hung around the cafeteria until he found out otherwise and made personal contact and had deep conversations with at least one individual that was a survivor of Benghazi that was in a long-term rehab, Walter Reed. And so that's the level that we have to go to to get an admission.

I wanted to ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania just a series of questions that clutter my mind. Have you seen a list of the survivors of Benghazi, those survivors that Mr. WOLF talked about that were picked up on the Tarmac at the airport in Benghazi and flown out by a Libyan plane?

Mr. PERRY. I have not seen the list.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do you know the name of any of those 30-some survivors?

Mr. PERRY. I do not.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And have you seen a timeline that shows what happened in Benghazi from beginning to end, one that is credible, that you have confidence in?

Mr. PERRY. Well, I certainly haven't seen anything that I have confidence in. There's been numerous ones put together, mostly by the side that wants to investigate, that's trying to piece it together based on open-source information.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Open-source timeline. Have you seen any timeline of the Situation Room in the White House?

Mr. PERRY. We have no knowledge of anything in the Situation Room in the White House.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Just wondering. When the assault went on in the compound that took out Osama bin Laden, and I would ask the gentleman, did you see any pictures from inside the Situation Room, and did you see a timeline of the events that took place on that assault?

Mr. PERRY. Sure. The whole world saw that, and rightly so.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Exactly. And as I draw a comparison to Benghazi and the takedown of Osama bin Laden, those circumstances would have been similar, except that we initiated the operation against Osama bin Laden, so I presume there were some people that got invitations to go into the Situation Room and be there. We saw the looks of worry and concern on their faces. I remember the President there in front of it, Secretary Clinton was there, and others in that setting.

But we have no visuals of who was in the Situation Room during Benghazi. We have no timeline of who came into the room, who was in the room, who left the room or when. And in that list would be when the President came, how long he was there, and when he left.

We don't know the answers to that, even though everybody that was in the Situation Room would have known when the President arrived. They would have known when he left. They would have remembered precisely all dialogue that came from the President and almost all that went to the President.

That's how I envision it. Would you envision that the same way, Mr. PERRY?

Mr. PERRY. That's exactly right.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And so the American people need to know this. Do you have any knowledge of who had custody of the body of Ambassador Stevens from the moment he was killed until such time as he turned up at the hospital in Benghazi?

Mr. PERRY. Well, there's been some conflicting reports between, again, open source, between the rebels, and

then he went to the hospital and was picked up by some of the folks from Tripoli; but then he wasn't there, and they—there's nothing congruent in that.

I'm not sure the custody, the chain of custody regarding the Ambassador's body. We're pretty sure we know what happened to it, and it's very unpleasant. But again, without an autopsy we can't even be sure of that.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would agree. And the individuals that delivered Ambassador Stevens' body to the hospital should be available to us. We should have been able to put them under oath and gather the record of what took place there. We don't know who had custody of Ambassador Stevens' body. We just know his body showed up at the hospital.

And the balance of that is conjecture, although we've seen at least one picture of him being carried through the streets in a vertical way, with no knowledge of whether he was alive or dead at that time. Most believe that he was dead at that time, but we just simply don't know.

And can you imagine if it's your family member who had gone through this, and to be locked out from the truth, if you'd lost one of the four lives that we lost in that, or if you're one of those that is wounded and has been muzzled.

□ 1215

The argument came out yesterday that the administration asserts that they have not commanded people to be muzzled or to be quiet about what happened in Benghazi, yet there's the intimidation factor. If your top officers lean on you and say, You've already taken a confidentiality oath, you better stick with that confidentiality oath.

As a former member of the armed services, if you're bound by confidentiality and you've already taken the oath and then your commander, your superior comes to you and says, You've been involved in an incident, and you're bound to that confidentiality, would you honor that, Mr. PERRY?

Mr. PERRY. Well, in the interest of national security, you're in a dilemma. You've taken an oath and you do have a confidentiality requirement. However, I would also say there is a compelling reason for you to provide information to the American people and certainly to the Congress.

I know that the Foreign Affairs Committee has set up hearings with some of these folks and they have said they were coming, and then, miraculously and mysteriously, they declined between the time they said they were coming and the time they were supposed to appear. And so we're not sure why they would agree to it at the onset and then decide to change their mind hence. I think it's a very compelling question. But I think in the interest of finding out the truth, they would be compelled to testify under oath.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do you believe that the attack by our enemies on our

Ambassador and the other victims was a planned attack or a spontaneous eruption?

Mr. PERRY. There's no doubt in America's mind, the world's mind. Libyan intelligence knew it within 24 hours.

And we have the fact that our Ambassador, which—by the way, I must say that it besmirches her credibility, the President's credibility, the administration's credibility, including the recent activities regarding Syrian foreign policy and decisionmaking, to go out for weeks on end, including the President, and issue talking points that they clearly knew were false. They knew they were false, and the world knows they're false now. Most of the world knew they were false then.

This was not a spontaneous eruption of violence, including RPGs and a coordinated attack. Coordinating the attack requires planning. It requires resourcing. That didn't happen in a few moment's time over a video, which maybe that gentleman is still in prison to this day. The only person held accountable for this, I think, is arguably somebody who had absolutely nothing to do with this.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do you believe that the administration knew in real-time that it was a planned attack on our Ambassador and an assassination attempt?

Mr. PERRY. Since the Ambassador himself and his deputy both reported it was a real-time, coordinated attack, not a spontaneous demonstration, I'm very certain in my heart and my mind that the administration knew what was happening.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Do you think Susan Rice knew when she went before the five television networks the following Sunday?

Mr. PERRY. Again, we want to know who changed the talking points. I don't want to indict her if she was given the talking points. But at the level she was operating, she either should have known or corroborated the talking points. And so, to a certain extent, I think she's culpable, and it's reasonable to expect that she did know the talking points were changed and she was misleading the public.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania if he attended the classified briefing Monday at 5 o'clock.

Mr. PERRY. I did.

Mr. KING of Iowa. What level of confidence did that give you when you see Ambassador Susan Rice there to lead the briefing?

Mr. PERRY. Again, I suggest that the administration has a trust and confidence issue not only with this Congress but with the American people, and that is one of the reasons. You can't send somebody out at the top levels of government to provide information on such a sensitive issue as potentially going to war or an act of war whose credibility has been diminished by her own actions and the actions of

this administration. So I think that that trust and confidence has been eroded because of prior actions, particularly with Benghazi and Libya.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And I would agree wholeheartedly, Mr. PERRY, and end this one remaining component of this topic that I think that you alluded to somewhat in your statement. The question is: What was Ambassador Stevens doing in Benghazi?

We've seen the announcement that came out last night or today that our administration is funneling weapons now into some elements of the Free Syrian Army. I'm concerned that those elements are the Muslim Brotherhood elements of the Free Syrian Army. But they have now announced that they're finally getting some resources in there. If that was the plan and the strategy, to funnel weapons into the Free Syrian Army a year ago, that would have been a better strategy because the Muslim Brotherhood hadn't completely taken over that operation then.

But some have speculated in the media—and we don't know because we haven't had a select committee that brought all this information out—that that was part of the business that may have been taking place in Benghazi. I don't have confirmation that that is the case. And I would ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania if you have seen any evidence that that might be the operation that was taking place and the reason that Ambassador Stevens was in Benghazi that day.

Mr. PERRY. We've seen no evidence. We've been given no evidence. We have asked the questions directly and been denied.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Denied a straight answer to that.

Mr. PERRY. Denied any answers.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Denied any answers.

So what we know is that the administration immediately announced that it was a spontaneous eruption of a protest over a video. How they ever found that information to even be able to tie it to it because it's completely disconnected and illogical, but they sent Susan Rice out before the American public and on five networks she gave the same story. And now she's been awarded with the confidence of the President to advance her even more within this administration and sent before the House of Representatives in a classified setting to lead us in the briefing on potential Syrian engagement.

So we know it wasn't a video. Do we know if the individual who actually produced that video is yet out of jail? Do you have any information?

Mr. PERRY. He may be. I'm not sure. He may be out of jail. But I know he was held accountable at some point, and he literally did go to jail. And I would say it's arguable that he had absolutely anything to do with this or anything else.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And the last information I had was that he was still in

jail. That's been some weeks ago. But I think he's a person you might be able to identify as a political prisoner at this point. It's unlikely that he would be in jail for his not meeting the parole requirements for this period of time except for the politics that he got wrapped up into, Madam Speaker.

All of these things that are inaccuracies and some of them outright dishonesties. There's been no question that this administration went out and willfully misinformed the American people. They did so in open source setting, the President's dialogue directly to the United Nations and multiple oblique references to a video. They knew in real-time that it was a planned attack. There's a reason why we know that, and I know Mr. PERRY knows that reason.

I ask you if you can tell us here why we know that it was a planned attack against our U.S. Ambassador.

Mr. PERRY. Like I said, you don't just bring heavy weapons like RPGs and things of this sort to a spontaneous eruption and demonstration. Like I said, it requires resourcing, ammunition.

This thing went on for hours and hours with heavy weapons. You just don't show up with a belt-fed weapon and the ammunition to support it on a whim. This is something that's heavy to carry. The ammunition is heavy to carry. It requires vehicles and people and coordination and what we call fields of fire, so you don't shoot the friendly; you only shoot the enemy. This coordination takes effort and time. It doesn't happen in a minute or two.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I recall a message that came out from the administration that Libya is a highly armed country and people walk around with AK-47s or else they've got them very handy so, if there's a violent demonstration, that they can grab their AK-47 and run to the sound of not the guns but the demonstration.

I don't disagree that that's a possibility in Libya. I know it was a possibility in Iraq with the armament that they have or the weapons they have in their homes. But we also know that there were RPGs there. We know that there were mortars there.

We know that there were two locations. The first location was where the attack took place, and then there was a fallback location. One was the compound and one was the annex. We know that there were mortar rounds dropped in on the secondary location. It looked like, the sequence, that they had already dialed in that secondary location as a target. If that's the case, not only was it a planned attack, but it was a planned attack with intel that had the secondary location, the alternative location where they would retreat to once attacked, and the primary location already set up, the mortars zeroed in on that.

Does that fit with what you know from a military background, I would ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Absolutely. A mortar is what we call an indirect fire method weapon. You don't necessarily have to see the target. You lob the round into the target. So it requires coordination and known points of where the mortar is located versus where the target is located. You have to shoot the right angle and the right azimuth.

It's not just something that's done capriciously or quickly. There's a thing called a baseplate, which holds this mortar tube. It has to be carried. It usually takes several men or a vehicle, depending on the size of the mortar. And then there's the ammunition that comes in cases. It's not something that you just carry around in your pocket. It's heavy. And you're not just shooting one, so multiple cases.

Again, logistics and support for this, planning for this. Of course, like you said, the planning on multiple locations of attack. They would have to know that. They would have to know the location of where it is, of course, and where their firing point was for the best field of fire and security from opposing fire.

Of course, I think the Ambassador described all this in his phone calls. Our troops on the ground, some of them who perished, lasered the target, expecting support from the United States, from what they knew. You never go without knowing who your support is going to be, what your backup plan is. These folks fully expected some guided munitions to come take out the assault, but it never came.

And so there's no doubt in my mind that this was a coordinated, well-prepared attack, and there's also no doubt in my mind that the administration knew this very early on. Maybe if they didn't know it within 24 hours, they certainly knew it within the span of a week. But the misleading of the American public went on for weeks.

Mr. KING of Iowa. If the gentleman were going to set up a mortar and zero in on a target, what would be the minimum number of rounds that it would take to have confidence that you can zero in on the top of a building?

Mr. PERRY. Well, a mortar is what we call an area weapon, so you're not going to shoot a mortar into a window. But what they fire on, they sometimes shoot long, they shoot over, or they shoot short. So they bracket it. They adjust the tube back and forth until they get it to range. But if you have a known point that you're firing from and a known point that you you're firing to, you can do that with much greater accuracy in much less time.

I would suggest that they had that all figured out when they showed up, which is how they were able to deliver rounds on the target immediately.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would ask the gentleman, if the third mortar round was the fatal round for two of our brave Americans, would that indicate that that mortar had been set up and planned in advance?

Mr. PERRY. Absolutely. You must know that it takes multiple, what we call, registration rounds and so on and so forth to bracket a target, multiple iterations of firing the tube or the mortar to hit the target. I'm talking half a dozen, a dozen times, and it's very precise.

So they knew exactly what they were doing. They had this planned well in advance, in my opinion.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And we would have known that in almost real-time in the Situation Room in the White House, would be what I would say, and yet still people went out and made the story that it was a movie. And then after the story of the movie began to break down, it became, well, it was actually a spontaneous response and people came running with the weapons that they had.

We've gotten more truth out in this dialogue that we've had here in this past 45 minutes on the floor of the House of Representatives than has willingly been brought forward by this administration.

I have said that Benghazi is worse than Watergate. I think that's a very easy position to hold in that Watergate was a burglary that the President found out about afterwards. It was wrong for President Nixon to seek to cover that burglary up. It cost him the Presidency and it cost America dearly in the events of history that unfolded from that, but this is something that goes deeper and worse.

I believe it was a planned assassination attack on our Ambassador, and I believe that we had a whole group of heroic Americans who conducted themselves very well and they deserve to be identified, if they want to be, and they deserve the respect and appreciation and the honor that the American people would like to give them.

The best thing we can do for the memories of those that are lost is to provide the full truth that goes outside that that must be classified. As history moves on, classification changes because of relevance of need for it to remain secret also changes.

So perhaps today we can pick up the momentum to get those final signatures on the Wolf resolution, get to the point where we can convince our Speaker that we need to have this special select committee to investigate Benghazi, that it incorporates the top people from the five committees that have jurisdiction to do those kind of hearings with a significant budget where we can make sure that it's well staffed and also subpoena the people that we need to put that record out into the public eye and the public ear, record that record and build that and put it into a bound copy, a version which says, This is the reasoned judgment of Congress. These are the facts as they can be gathered, and that has been scrutinized by the public in real-time.

□ 1230

If we do that—we can draw our conclusions; historians will be able to

draw their conclusions—we can do honor to those who lost their lives, gave their lives for us. We can do honor to those who have suffered serious wounds, and we can do honor to those who were in that conflict. And we can clean this up to the point where all of those that serve us in the Foreign Service and put their lives on the line—and there have been, by my recollection, eight Ambassadors who have lost their lives in the line of duty or died while in service of our country over the course of the history of the United States—Ambassador Stevens the most recent, the most violent, but also the one that they have the most questions about.

This was going to be an open administration, one of the most transparent in history. And now we have the Secretary of State who presided over this, who was the lead voice, the one who should have given us the most direct response, has not given us a full testimony. She did appear before a Senate committee and it was a limited amount of testimony, but she has not come clean with this.

As we see this, the situation of the coverup of the facts of Benghazi, we are also seeing the people that are engaged in this that do know the facts asking for an even higher level of responsibility in leadership, in fact, all the way to the White House seems to be the direction that the former Secretary of State would like to take. I'm going to suggest, Madam Speaker, that this can't happen in America. You cannot have someone who covered up something worse than Watergate find a path to go back to the White House and then put this country back under another shield to hide information, a coverup. The American people deserve the truth.

One of the strengths that we have as a Nation is because we have been willing to face the real truth, face the real realities, and brace up and take on the enemies within the world. The people that serve this country, and do so with dignity and honor and nobility, are those in uniform. But it isn't only those in uniform. It's those that are in the CIA. It's some of the civilian contractors that have served in our military that are also part now of civilian security detail. There are those in the State Department that know they're out there on the edge and on the end. We need to honor all of them by bringing the truth out.

There are many people, especially within the State Department and the CIA, who are sick at heart because they know the real truth. We need to give them an opportunity to bring that real truth out.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Well, you are absolutely right, Mr. KING. As you already stated, the American people deserve to know.

Scarcely 6 weeks ago, I talked to some of the families of the fallen who have not, since that fateful day nearly—well, it's a year ago now; then it

was just nearly a year—have still not gotten any answers from the administration. As a matter of fact, the administration doesn't talk to them at all. They're coming into Congress asking us to find answers.

I would ask the American people: Is that how you want the people that serve this country overseas in very dangerous situations to be treated? Some of these are former military members serving in this capacity as security detail for the Ambassador, or that just picked up and went to the fight, even though they were told not to, and gave their lives. Their lives were taken from them. And this is how their families are being treated. They're dead, and their families are getting no resolution. They're getting no closure on this thing. And it's at the hands of this Federal Government and this administration. It's reprehensible. And it can be stopped immediately if they would just answer the questions that we have, that all Americans have.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I will just say a few more words, Madam Speaker.

I sat through a series of briefings over the last week or a little better in different places around the world. In one of those briefings, one of our Special Operations Forces personnel made a point that they were ready to go to Benghazi. Now, there's nobody there that trains that isn't ready. Nobody is reluctant to step in and serve. No matter how dangerous a mission, no matter what the prospects are of success, if there are Americans in trouble and they are given the green light—and that's the order to go into battle—they don't hesitate. They don't shrink back. They don't think, "I wish I wasn't here." They train for that. And as they train for that, there is no hesitation.

So we should always know that our military men and women, our security personnel, there is no hesitation on their part. They wanted to be there. That's why, when they got the order to stand down at the third time, they went anyway because these were brethren that needed to be protected.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. PERRY. I would ask, Mr. KING, we were told that there wasn't adequate time, that reinforcements and help were too far away. How did the administration know how long this was going to take, how long this attack was going to go on for? Because when the calls came from the Ambassador, it was hours and hours later until he perished, until others perished. During that period of time, we could have sent people on the way. Maybe they would have never gotten there in time, and maybe that's still a failure in planning, but I think the American people could forgive the mistake with the effort. But the effort wasn't made at all.

And I wonder who made the determination that this is going to end in 2 hours or 3 hours or 10 hours or 10 minutes and said, No, we're not going to send anybody because it's going to be

over. How did they know that? I would suggest they never knew that because they never had any intention of sending anybody because they never had any plan. They never expected this, they never wanted this, and they hoped it would go away quietly into the night. That's what I would suggest.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Well, reclaiming my time, it appears to me that there was a political decision that was made in the Situation Room in the White House, and that political decision was: We're in a tough, tight, reelection battle. This is September 11. We are less than 2 months before the election date. This could become a whole pivotal issue that the election is decided upon. Let's see if we can slide this thing down and tamp it under the rug and maybe it will go away. Maybe it won't be as big or as bad as we fear that it is. That is the question that comes back.

There is a time in this job to do your duty. There is a time in this political arena that we're in that you set aside politics. There is a time when you look at your reelection and you decide, My job here in this moment doing the right thing is more important than any prospects of how people will vote 2 months from now or a year or more from now. That's that sense of duty.

That's why we take an oath to uphold this Constitution. We all stand here on the floor of this House and take this oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. The President does so. The executive personnel do so.

When I look back through history, I can think of no time that our leadership in the White House has decided that the political calculation was more important than the lives of an Ambassador that had an opportunity to be saved. And maybe we would not have been able to save the Ambassador. Maybe we could have saved two of the others that were killed later in that operation. But we could have at least been there to send that message and to intimidate. And we're now a year and a day later. The press has identified some of the perpetrators. They have gone to Benghazi and sat down and had lunch and interviewed them. There are at least three media networks that have interviewed one or more of these perpetrators. If we know who they are and justice was going to be brought to them, why hasn't that been the case? Why hasn't this administration acted?

Meanwhile, they will tell us they know exactly how to put a precision strike in on Assad in Syria to send just the right message that won't tip the balance of power and change the result of the civil war in Syria, but it will give him the message that he won't use weapons of mass destruction again. They have enough intel to apparently do that, but not enough intel to just follow the reporters around in Benghazi and collar the people that they talk to. That would be just that simple.

Furthermore, the intel that seems to have identified the elements of the

Free Syrian Army, I'll just say a few words about that that I've gathered as I have circumnavigated this globe and sat down in a whole series of meetings that took place that put the pieces of the puzzle together on the intel with Syria and Egypt and others.

Just on the Syria side, we had a Free Syrian Army that emerged. It emerged as a popular uprising against Assad for his cruel and evil dictatorship of his people and for killing some of his own people even then, his political enemies. And the Free Syrian Army emerged. So they should have easily been the people that we supported.

Well, as that battle went on, they were taking over different areas within Syria, tactical objectives and communities and cities and large geographical areas of Syria. And at a certain point, the Muslim Brotherhood stepped in. They took over some parts of the Free Syrian Army. They set up an operation to essentially sacrifice the leader of the Free Syrian Army. He was captured in an operation where he was sacrificed. They took him out of command. His successor commander now has been marginalized and pushed off to the side.

And the Free Syrian Army—the knowledge that I have—is now controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood and other radical Islamist entities, including al Qaeda. That is the entity that we now have good enough intel that we are starting to send supplies and military supplies into.

Those two entities, Assad and radical Islamist components, which is a large component of the Free Syrian Army, they're the bad guys. They're both our enemies. Yet the administration is in the business now, a year after that should have been happening in an aggressive way, of arming some of the wrong people.

It's not that we didn't have good choices. There still are good choices. There still are good people in Syria and outside Syria that will step forward that want to have a secular Syria, a Syria that has freedom of religion, a Syria that is run by the people of Syria. Those elements are still there in Syria and around Syria—at least 2 million Syrian refugees. That force can be put together. It takes longer than firing a cruise missile into Damascus and picking a target to send a pinprick message. It can be done, but I'm not confident that this administration has identified our friends.

What I have seen is that, when we've aligned with anybody in the Middle East, it's been the Muslim Brotherhood. We've had 2½ years of the Arab Spring; and in every break that has changed the power within the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, every break has gone in favor of the Muslim Brotherhood, except one. That is now, when the Muslim Brotherhood took over Egypt under Morsi. Thirty to 33 million people came to the streets in a popular demonstration—the largest demonstration in the history of the

world—to unseat Morsi because they don't have a constitutional way to impeach him. They didn't have a way to arrest him. The only thing they could do was go to the streets and demand that he be removed from power.

Our administration sent a message before Morsi came to power that Mubarak had to be gone yesterday—remember that word? “He needs to be gone yesterday.” Well, that upset the balance of power in Egypt. That helped Morsi come to power. Morsi squeaked by by winning an election with 5.8 million people voting for him out of 83 million or so Egyptians altogether. Not exactly what you would call a majority of the people supporting Morsi—Morsi's complete incompetence, but also his very bold moves to consolidate power within Egypt to where it became clear that there was not going to be another election in Egypt and that the Muslim Brotherhood was going to impose shari'a law. And you start seeing that happen.

Well, 30 to 33 million people in the streets of Egypt, and the Egyptian military stepped forward to support the popular uprising that took place. Now they have laid out a time line, a roadmap to write a constitution, put a constitution out on a public vote to ratify and then to elect a president and a civilian government. And General Assisi has pledged to turn over this military control of the Egyptian Government to a newly elected, legitimate civilian government. That time line is a good time line. It's a good commitment that has been set up and it's a good result.

The problem we have is that our administration was against Mubarak and helped push him out of power. That helped open the door for Morsi, who came in—one of the Muslim Brotherhood. And it's clear, this new leadership, the interim President of Egypt, General Assisi, commanding the military—and also, by the way, they have the support of the Pope of the Coptic Christian Church in Egypt—all of that, the new forces are clear. They oppose the Muslim Brotherhood.

The struggle within the Middle East, Muslim Brotherhood, radical Islam, radical and violent Islamist groups working against the free people in that part of the world, we need to be on the right side of everyone, not on the wrong side of everyone. And the administration is going to have to turn their course around in Egypt and get behind the new administration and support new elections and a new constitution.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. I would like to pose a question to you based on what you've seen regarding Syria and Benghazi and Libya, the classified briefings and your travels.

This administration reported to us that Syria had used chemical weapons 11 times previously. On the 12th time, we want to send a message that that's not okay—and it's not okay, let's be

clear about that. But why didn't we send a message and why haven't we sent a message that it's not okay to kill a United States Ambassador? When is that message going to be sent?

I would just like to get your thoughts on that and the dichotomy and the lack of parallel in some kind of strategy and foreign policy that is congruent and makes sense to our allies and our adversaries.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Well, I would just say to the gentleman that he has pointed out a stark contradiction in our policy. Eleven or 12 times of alleged, at least, weapons of mass destruction used against the Syrian people. I'm going to suggest that this push now is because some of the people that want those elements of the Free Syrian Army that I described to succeed are saying, Help us out by landing a strike or two in on Assad. That's my guess.

But with regard to justice for the people that perpetrated the Benghazi incident against our Americans and our American Ambassador, that justice needs to be delivered. We know who some of those people are. And it's irresponsible of this administration to shut information down to the United States Congress, to the American people, and to fail to act when they have a clear act of war committed against the United States on U.S. territory.

□12:45

I'm aware that the clock has ticked down here to the end.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for coming to the floor. I'm sure that he wasn't aware that this wasn't choreographed. It was a spontaneous eruption of protest calling for the truth to come out and a light to shine on Benghazi.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his leadership on this, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). The Chair would remind Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

PRINCIPLES FOR MODERNIZING THE MILITARY COMPENSATION AND RETIREMENT SYSTEMS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 113-60)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 674(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for